

**LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS**  
**ASSEMBLYMEMBER MERVYN M. DYMALLY, CHAIR**  
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**CALIFORNIA'S LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS  
CALLS ATTENTION TO HIV/AIDS IN THE  
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

**Caucus Joins Nation of Black State Legislators in  
Declaring February 7 as National Black HIV/AIDS Day**

**SACRAMENTO** – The California Legislative Black Caucus will observe February 7 as National Black HIV AIDS Awareness Day. Caucus Members will wear t-shirts that ask the question “Got AIDS? How do you know?” to floor session in an attempt to encourage African Americans to get screened for HIV. In addition, the Black Caucus has introduced [HR 4](#) (National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day) to proclaim February 7 as National Black HIV AIDS Day in the State of California.

February 7, 2007 marks the seventh annual observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD). This national mobilization effort is designed to encourage African Americans across the United States and Territorial Areas to get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated for HIV/AIDS, as it continues to devastate Black communities.

“It is imperative that we garner as much attention as possible on the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” states **Majority Leader Assemblymember Karen Bass** (D-Los Angeles), Vice-Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus. “On this day, we will join other Caucuses throughout the country to bring awareness to this issue that has become a serious health crisis in the Black community.”

“AIDS in America today is a Black Disease,” said **Phill, Wilson**, executive director of the Black AIDS Institute. “The AIDS epidemic in Black America will not end unless and until Black leaders take leadership on this issue. The Black AIDS Institute is proud to partner with Black state legislators across the country to build a national Black mobilization against the AIDS epidemic in our communities.”

(more)

“As the author of California’s African American HIV/AIDS Initiative AB 1142, and an individual who has a commitment to the health and safety of all people, I stand in solidarity with our nation in recognition of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day,” said **Assemblymember Mervyn M. Dymally** (D-Compton) Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus and Assembly Health Committee.

“More than half of all people living with HIV/AIDS and newly infected with HIV each year are African Americans,” said **Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas** (D-Los Angeles). “Among women, Blacks account for two-thirds of all new infections. These facts represent an unprecedented crisis for Black America and we—all of us—have to do something to turn this disturbing trend around.”

“Shocking statistics from the State show that African Americans represent nearly 19 percent of all people living with AIDS in California, of which 80% are men,” commented **Assemblymember Sandre Swanson** (D-Oakland). “As a society, unless we control this growing pandemic, the crisis will be felt by every community, regardless of economic status.”

In California African Americans represent more than 6 percent of the total population while they represent approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that Blacks accounts for almost half (49%) of the nation’s AIDS cases. According to the National Center for Health Statistics 2006 Report, HIV/AIDS is one of the top 10 leading causes of death for African Americans; and in the same year African Americans accounted for more than half (54 percent) of estimated new HIV infections in the United States.

*The California Legislative Black Caucus Members include: Assemblymember Mervyn M. Dymally (D-Compton); Chair, Assemblymember Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles); Vice-Chair, Senator Edward Vincent (D-Inglewood); Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles); Assemblymember Laura Richardson (D-Long Beach); Assemblymember Wilmer Amina-Carter (D-San Bernardino); Assemblymember Sandre Swanson (D-Oakland); Assemblymember Mike Davis (D-Los Angeles); and Assemblymember Curen Price (D-Inglewood).*

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